

Censorship on network/cable television in this age of DVRs, readily accessible streamed and DVD movies, YouTube, online television and internet pornography is antiquated and meaningless. If television shows had accurate ratings (which some stations do attempt to do, such as TV-MA, S L V N), parents could take responsibility for their viewing choices and for policing their own children's viewing without ludicrously censoring content that the remaining audience of a particular show is ready and willing to watch. Give viewers the tools to police their own household and there will be no need to police all the households. There are too many points of access out there – policing a very few of them just hinders the creative abilities of the few who still fall under FCC regulations.

Both the FCC and the MPAA needs to review how they define and grade violence – a brutal rape is not at all the same thing as a cartoonish dinosaur attack, though they both receive the same exposure (and ratings warning) in both film and television. So-called objectionable language is everywhere – on the street, in the mouths of friends, strangers, in books, and really, it's just words. Are there really people still who faint when they hear the mild cursing from the era of M*A*S*H, or glimpse a piano leg under a tablecloth? They should probably just not watch television. They don't have to start saying the words if they don't want to. And surely, they have been heard before.

The non-premium cable networks that allow words such as “shit” to be uttered without censorship (FX and AMC for example) have growing viewership and critical acclaim despite their more liberal broadcast policies. HBO is another example of how the audience seeks out and appreciates realistic portrayals of characters, language, sexuality, etc. It produces award-winning shows that garner audiences of adults (and children with critical thinking skills). If adults were still in their delicate “but the children!” bubble that the 1950s fomented, those shows on AMC and premium channels would not have the viewership and adoring fan bases and critical acclaim that they do. Let the market decide what it will tolerate.

Most of the bleeping being done these days barely disguises the word being said, and is now just an arbitrary hoop a show has to jump through to meet some law - one which they can prepay the fines to circumvent (see: Howard Stern, South Park, Daily Show) – thus eliminating the point of a “safe” channel free from such words. The “Bullshit Mountain” episode of *The Daily Show* obviously went over its prepaid scripted allotment of utterances of that word (one that refers to something we all do every day, not a slur or a threat or hate speech) because two random instances were bleeped mid-episode. To what end were we “protected” from that inoffensive word, if Comedy Central can pay to have it not bleeped, but they still had to bleep the two unexpected extra ones? And who is being protected?

Portrayal of healthy sexuality is less damaging to the psyche than portrayals of violence, but sexuality in America has always been treated as the ultimate horror, from which everyone must be protected. Parents need to take responsibility for teaching their kids about what they are seeing on television. If you don't want to watch that steamy show, no one is making you. If you don't want your kid to watch that steamy show, keep them in a box because they will find a way anyway. The rest of us might want to watch it, but thanks to the McCarthy-era censorship regulations, I am watching an awkwardly fake version of it. You don't have to watch that super violent show, either. Nor do we have to watch truly tasteless things like *Honey Boo Boo*.

In the case of “wardrobe malfunctions” or exclamatory outbursts by Oscar winners, why should the producing company be fined for an unavoidable – and damage-free – mistake? Why should *any* party be fined for that? What harm did Janet Jackson do to the world when her blouse tore? We might not even have noticed it but for all the manufactured outrage surrounding it. She has a nipple, just like the entire population of the planet does. If a parent does not know how to explain a female nipple to their

child, it is not the television industry's job to take over parenting of their child. If someone unexpectedly drops an F-Bomb in their glee over winning a prize, how has that harmed the country, the children, the integrity of the channel on which that moment was broadcast? It has not.

Save your policing for things that truly cause harm. Rate shows according to their content (keeping sexuality, nudity, language, violence separate from each other) and let the audiences decide and the adults can each take responsibility in their own homes.